

Policy Manual

Section:	Infrastructure Services
Subject:	Establishing Community Safety Zones
Policy Number:	047
Approval Date:	
Approved By:	Resolution #
Prepared By:	Manager, Operations and Drainage

1. Objective

Community Safety Zones (CSZ) were introduced to Ontario in 1998 under the Highway Traffic Act. These are sections of roadway where public safety is of special concern and are under the jurisdiction of the local municipality. Community Safety Zones are typically identified on roadways near schools, daycare centres, playgrounds, parks, hospitals, senior citizen residences and roadway sections with identified high collision or road speed violation rates.

The objective of this policy is to provide an objective tool and formal process to guide the Town in establishing and maintaining Community Safety Zones. The goal of setting a Community Safety Zone is to help modify driver behavior and improve safety on municipally selected sections of road where public safety is of special concern.

The behavior modification is to be achieved through increased fines for traffic violations committed within Community Safety Zones (CSZs).

2. Definitions

AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

The total volume of traffic passing a point or segment of a roadway, in both directions for one year, divided by the number of days in the year.

Municipal Highway

Includes a common and public highway, street, avenue, parkway, driveway, square, place, bridge, viaduct or trestle, any part of which is intended for or used by the general public for the passage of vehicles and includes the area between the lateral property lines thereof; all under the jurisdiction of the Town of Essex.

Posted Speed Limit

The speed prescribed for motor vehicles on a section of road by municipal by-law in accordance with the provincial Highway Traffic Act.

85th Percentile Speed

The speed at which 85 percent of drivers are observed to travel at under free flowing conditions past a monitored point.

3. Scope

The authority for the Town of Essex to designate Community Safety Zones is granted by the Province of Ontario under the *Highway Traffic Act (HTA)* as amended. Under this legislation, Town Council by by-law, can designate any part of a Municipal Highway under its jurisdiction as a community safety zone.

4. Establishing Community Safety Zones

4.1 Designating Community Safety Zones

- 4.1.1 Town Council may designate a portion of a municipal road as a Community Safety Zone if it is determined through this policy that public safety is of special concern on that portion of the road which may be addressed through the establishment of a Community Safety Zone.
- 4.1.2 The designation of Community Safety Zones shall take place through the passing of a by-law which will specify the portion of municipal road and effective time(s) of the designation.
- 4.1.3 Signs must be installed in accordance with the regulations outlined in Book 5 of the Ontario Traffic Manual, identifying that portion of the road as a Community Safety Zone. The designation of the Community Safety Zone will not be in effect until the appropriate signs are installed.
 - 4.1.3.1 The signs that include the "BEGINS" and "ENDS" tabs define the legal limits of the zone. The rules of the road do not change within the zone but the penalties for any violations thereof occurring within the legal limits of the zone are substantially increased.
- 4.1.4 A media release shall be issued once the designation has taken place notifying the public of the location of the new Community Safety Zone and the consequences for violations within the zone.

4.2 Requests for Community Safety Zone Designation

- 4.2.1 Resident requests for a Community Safety Zone shall require support from at least 65% of the residents residing on that section of road. Support will be determined through petition in the format provided in 'Appendix A'. If there is not at least 65% support for the request, a written reply will be sent to the petitioner advising that the request will not be considered at this time. If there is 65% or greater support for the request, the petition will be presented to Town of Essex Council.
- 4.2.2 Town of Essex Council, by resolution, may also request any area in the Town of Essex to be evaluated for designation of a Community Safety Zone.
- 4.2.3 Shall either section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 occur, Administration shall then, by written report, make a recommendation using the attached policy that identifies the eligibility of the request and the details of establishing a Community Safety Zone in the requested location.
- 4.2.4 Requests for portions of road under the jurisdiction of the County of Essex to be designated as Community Safety Zones shall be made by formal resolution of Town Council and forwarded to the County of Essex.

4.3 Eligibility for Community Safety Zones

- 4.3.1 Designation of Community Safety Zones should only be considered in areas of special concern for public safety, including:
 - a) Roadways located adjacent to schools and daycares;
 - b) Roadways located adjacent to senior's residences or facilities;
 - c) Roadways located adjacent to community recreation centres;
 - d) Roadways located adjacent to community playgrounds; and
 - e) Roadways with identified high collision or road speed violation rates.
- 4.3.2 Designation of Community Safety Zones should only be considered in locations noted in section 4.3.1, where one of the following criteria apply:
 - a) A School, daycare, playground, park, hospital or senior citizen residences is located within the proposed community safety zone; or
 - b) Local police at their discretion determine and/or verify an unusually high road speed violation or high collision rate within the proposed Community Safety Zone location; or
 - c) A minimum of three of the following concerns to public safety are determined to be present in the proposed Community Safety Zone location:

- i. Posted speed limit causes concern for collision risk;
- ii. Relatively high 85th percentile over posted speed limit;
- iii. High annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes (greater than 2,000 vehicles per day);
- iv. Absence or limitations of sidewalks causes risks for pedestrians;
- v. Relatively high truck volumes; and
- vi. Relatively high number of intersection or accesses causes concern for increased collision risk;
- vii. A high number of crashes per year on the proposed segment of road (greater than 1:900 [crashes per year: AADT])

4.3.3 Designation of Community Safety Zones should only be considered after being reasonably satisfied that less severe measures are failing to mitigate public safety risks.

4.3.4 Designation of Community Safety Zones should only be considered after a site audit has been conducted to ensure there are no physical impediments that may prevent or restrict the establishment of a Community Safety Zone.

4.3.5 Designation of Community Safety Zones should only be considered when sufficient enforcement resources exist. Establishing Community Safety Zones without appropriate enforcement will reduce the effectiveness of the objective of driver behaviour modification.

5. Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the Director of Infrastructure Services to ensure that staff is aware and follow this policy.
- It is the responsibility of the Clerk to administer and verify the validity of the petition as described in this policy.
- It is the responsibility of the Operations Manager to ensure that reviews are conducted in accordance with this policy.
- It is the responsibility of employees of the Town of Essex to ensure that the procedures set forth in the policy are adhered to.

6. References

Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, as amended

Ontario Traffic Manual

Safer School Zones Act, 2017